

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

Claim 26 has been cancelled, and the subject matter thereof has been introduced into Claim 25. Claim 25 has been further amended to recite that the protrusions form clearances between the disc shaped radial vanes fixed to the tip portion of the handle of the toothbrush. Basis for this is found in paragraph [0017] on page 7 of the specification.

Claim 26 was again rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Winiewski in view of Ben-Ari. Applicants wish to thank Examiner Nguyen for the courtesy of an interview on April 1, 2011, in which this rejection was discussed. In particular, Applicants argued that Ben-Ari does not teach the claimed protrusions. As a result of this discussion, it was agreed that the claims as amended according to the present response would overcome the cited prior art.

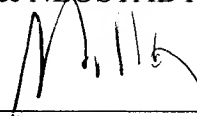
As is described in paragraphs [0017] and [0036], and elsewhere in the specification, the protrusions 3 form clearances when the radial vanes are mounted so as to be superposed at the tip of the brush handle. Thus, the bristle density in the axial direction is lowered without using spacers. The bristle density in the axial direction in the brush head can thereby be reduced, whereby the possibility of hurting gums, mucous membranes and enamel is reduced, the bristle tips can easily be inserted between teeth and brushing performance is improved.

The Office Action indicated that such protrusions would have been obvious in view of Ben-Ari, presumably the hub 44 shown in Fig. 3A. However, the hubs 44 reduce friction (col. 5, lines 9-13) and would not be obvious for fixed vanes. It was therefore agreed that the claims as amended according to the present response would overcome the cited prior art.

Applicants therefore believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit an early Notice of Allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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